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Their Men in Santo Domingo

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THE Dominican crisis reached a critical point on May 16: General Imbert's junta was not yet strong enough to mount a decisive offensive against the Constitutionalists, and the U.S. force could no longer suppress them unaided, especially in view of the overwhelming protest movement in all parts of the world. It was at this critical juncture that Washington sent in its "political team." Led by McGeorge Bundy, President Johnson's special assistant on national security, it included Under-Secretary of State Mann, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Vaughn, and Deputy Defence Secretary Vance. They immediately began negotiations with General Imbert, with a view, the U.S. press reported, to working out a peaceful settlement.

However, even from the meagre information seeping into the press it appears that the Bundy group were negotiating anything but a peaceful settlement. They discussed ways and means of suppressing the patriotic movement and bolstering Imbert's junta by "economic assistance."

General Antonio Imbert Barreras, the *Wall Street Journal* wrote on May 12, is an adroit "political manoeuvrer," the kind of "strong man" the United States wants in Dominica. Whether or not he will become a second Trujillo or remain just a temporary Wall Street placeman, an understanding of why Washington's choice fell on him is essential for a clear picture of what is happening in this small Caribbean island republic.

Dominican Lobby

Mr. Averell Harriman, President Johnson's special representative in Latin America, declared on May 6: "We have no interests in the Dominican Republic."

Whom he meant by "we" was not specified. But the fact is that the U.S. monopolies, and notably the powerful Rockefeller, Morgan and Mellon groups, have a very deep interest in everything in Dominica that can be made to produce profit. Agriculture is entirely controlled by the South Puerto Rico Sugar Company and United Fruit; mining, and particularly bauxite deposits, by the Aluminium Co. of America; banking by the First National City Bank of New York, America's second biggest. U.S. investments in Dominica are estimated at $250 million.

But it is not only a matter of investments. There is a lot of politics, corrupt politics, behind the investments.

Trujillo's military intelligence chief, Arturo R. Espaillat, tells the story, or at least part of it, in his book "Trujillo, the Last Caesar." He says that a number of high-ranking Washington officials have a personal interest in Dominican affairs. All of them received handouts from the Dominican lobby. Espaillat gives the price list: an ordinary Representative "would cost about $5,000 or less," Committee Chairmen were rated at "about three times that much." Senators were worth very much more, and Chairmen of Senate Committees rated anything between $50,000 and $75,000. Money was not the only inducement. One State Department official, for instance, was "provided with a blonde." In fact, the lobby had a string of blondes on tap for influential southern Senators and New York Congressmen.

Trujillo's files disappeared after his death—removed, Espaillat says, by U.S. secret agents. An American correspondent, Robert Jones of the *Indianapolis Star*, wrote: The files "are supposed to have been spirited out of the Dominican Republic and are believed to be in Washington.... The evidence is believed to be in the hands of certain officials of the U.S. government—but which officials not even the investigators seem to know."

Some of the details came to light during investigations by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and some of the disclosures found their way into the press. It appears that beneficiaries of the Dominican lobby include Senators Strom Thurmond, Allen J. Ellender and George A. Smathers, also House of Representatives Speaker John W. McCormack and Congressmen Cooley, Jackson and Withrow. Others listed as recipients of Dominican largesse are Senators Martin and Byrd.

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